

JUN 12 2006

SN. 10/016,079

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IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1. (*Currently Amended*) A system for managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals over a computer network, the system comprising:

a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers ~~who that~~ subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

a presenting section that presents the advertising messages over the computer network to the users ~~who use the information service via the plurality of user terminals~~;

a contributing section that contributes a digital content from one of the user via one of the user terminals together with status information indicating that the contributed digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the contributed digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor;

a registering section that registers the contributed digital content into the second database together with the status information;

a distributing section that distributes the registered digital content ~~[[s]] to the users~~ another of the user via another of the user terminals upon request from the another user ~~[[s]]~~ over the computer network; and

an allocating section that allocates at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor ~~[[s]]~~ of the registered digital contents ~~distributed to the users~~ content identified in the status information.

2. (*Currently Amended*) The system according to claim 1, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating section allocates the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors only when the protected digital contents are distributed to the users via the user terminals.

3. (*Currently Amended*) The system according to claim 1, ~~further comprising a contributing section that contributes digital contents from users together with status information indicating~~

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~~whether or not the contributed digital contents are subject to the legal protection, and a registering section that registers the contributed digital contents into the second database together with the status information, such that wherein~~ the allocating section allocates the collected advertisement fees only if the registered digital contents are is distributed under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

4. *(Currently Amended)* The system according to claim 1, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that the allocating section allocates a part of the collected advertisement fees to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is distributed to the users via the user terminals.

5. *(Currently Amended)* A method of managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals over a computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

creating providing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers ~~who that~~ subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

creating providing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

presenting the advertising messages over the computer network to the users ~~who use the information service via the plurality of the user terminals~~;

contributing a digital content from one of the users via one of the user terminals together with status information indicating that the contributed digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the contributed digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor;

registering the contributed digital content into the second database together with the status information;

distributing the registered digital content[[s]] ~~to the users~~ another of the users via another of the user terminals upon request from the another user[[s]] over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor[[s]] of the registered digital contents ~~distributed to the users~~, content identified in the status information.

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6. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 5, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are distributed to the users via the user terminals.

7. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 5, ~~further comprising the steps of contributing digital contents from users together with status information indicating whether or not the contributed digital contents are subject to the legal protection, and registering the contributed digital contents into the second database together with the status information, such that~~ wherein the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital contents ~~are~~ is distributed under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

8. *(Currently Amended)* The method according to claim 5, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is distributed to the users via the user terminals.

9. *(Currently Amended)* A machine readable medium for use in a server having a CPU and managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals over a computer network, the medium containing program instructions executable by the CPU for causing the server to perform a method comprising the steps of:

managing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers who that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

managing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

presenting the advertising messages over the computer network to the users ~~who use the information service via the plurality of the user terminals~~;

contributing a digital content from one of users via one of the user terminals together with status information indicating that the contributed digital content is subject to the legal

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protection and identifying a content proprietor of the contributed digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor;

registering the contributed digital content into the second database together with the status information;

distributing the registered digital content[[s]] to the users another of the users via another of the user terminals upon request from the another user[[s]] over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor[[s]] of the registered digital contents distributed to the users, content identified in the status information.

10. *(Currently Amended)* The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are distributed to the users via the user terminals.

11. *(Currently Amended)* The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein ~~the method further comprises the steps of contributing digital contents from users together with status information indicating whether or not the contributed digital contents are subject to the legal protection, and registering the contributed digital contents into the second database together with the status information, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital contents are~~ is distributed under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

12. *(Currently Amended)* The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is distributed to the users via the user terminals.

13. *(Currently Amended)* A computer-readable storage device storing a computer program executable by a server for managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the

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information service via a plurality of user terminals over a computer network, the computer program comprising ~~the steps of instructions for:~~

managing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers ~~who~~ that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

managing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

presenting the advertising messages over the computer network to the users ~~who use the information service via the plurality of user terminals;~~

contributing a digital content from one of the users via one of the user terminals together with status information indicating that the contributed digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the contributed digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor;

registering the contributed digital content into the second database together with the status information;

distributing the registered digital content[[s]] ~~to the users~~ another of the users via another of the user terminals upon request from the another user[[s]] over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor[[s]] of the registered digital contents ~~distributed to the users~~, content identified in the status information.

14. (*Currently Amended*) The computer-readable storage device ~~program~~ according to claim 13, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are distributed to the users via the user terminals.

15. (*Currently Amended*) The computer-readable storage device ~~program~~ according to claim 13, ~~further comprising the steps of contributing digital contents from users together with status information indicating whether or not the contributed digital contents are subject to the legal protection, and registering the contributed digital contents into the second database together with the status information, such that~~ wherein the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital contents ~~are~~ is distributed under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

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16. (*Currently Amended*) The computer-readable storage device ~~program~~ according to claim 13, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is distributed to the users via the user terminals.